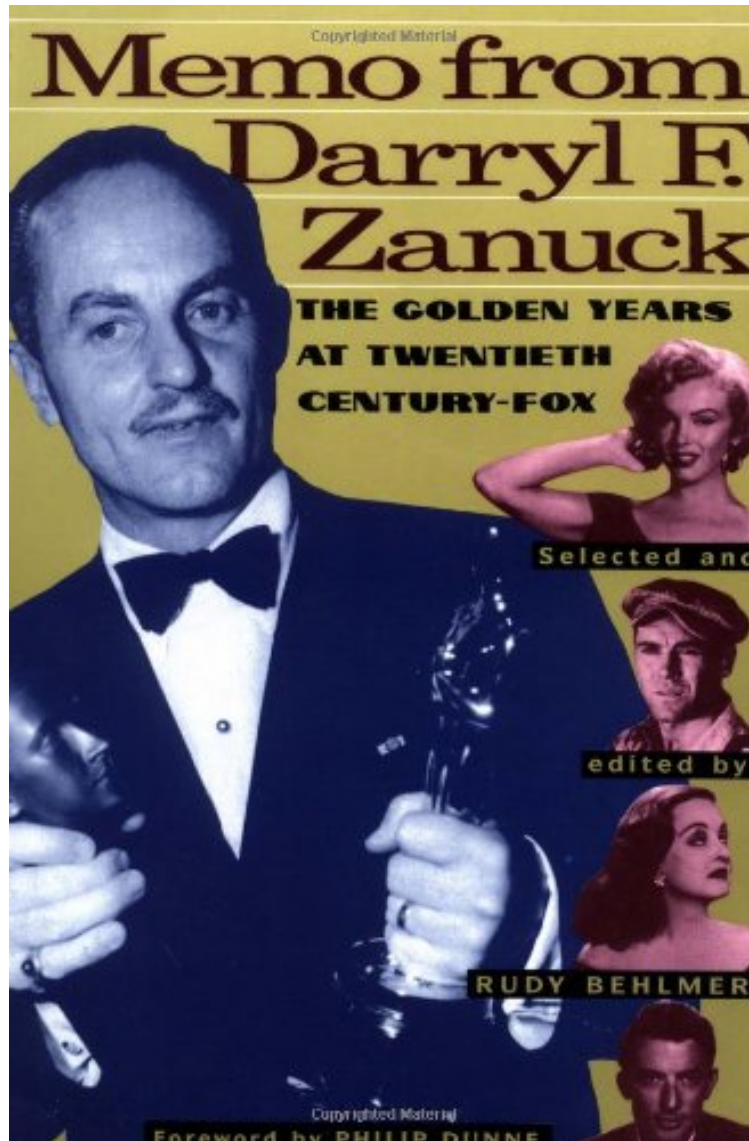


## Memo from Darryl F. Zanuck: The Golden Years at Twentieth Century Fox

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**From Brand: Grove Press : Memo from Darryl F. Zanuck: The Golden Years at Twentieth Century Fox** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Memo from Darryl F. Zanuck: The Golden Years at Twentieth Century Fox:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful insights into film production By Customer This is a great book for getting a glimpse into the world of film production during the "Golden Age of Hollywood". Although the

book is based on the memos of Darryl Zanuck who was the boss of Twentieth-Century Fox, the memos touch on many basic issues facing the industry as a whole, as well as specifically dealing with films done at 20th Century-Fox. The author/editor clearly explains in the beginning of the book what these memos represent: this is not a comprehensive collection of Darryl Zanuck's personal notes. (In fact, virtually all of Zanuck's personal notes have been lost). These memos were sent by Zanuck to directors, producers, writers, actors, etc., and have been retrieved over many years of searching private archives, libraries and estates. So this book presents a small, but very illustrative collection of Zanuck's memos during the Golden Age. Why should we care about Darryl Zanuck's memos? What is particularly interesting about Zanuck as a studio boss is that he was highly involved in the creative details of film-making. Unlike the other famous studio bosses (Mayer, Warner, Zukor, Cohn), he read through most of the scripts for the A level productions, and made detailed suggestions on changes and rewrites. He also watched rushes (raw footage during filming) on a daily basis, and made comments to the directors during the film schedule. Finally, he was directly involved in the final editing of all A level films. These memos provide a very detailed and inside view of how some well known movies progressed through rewrites and changes initiated by Zanuck. We also have memos that deal with contemporary issues that affected all of the Hollywood studios (e.g., Screenwriters unionizing in the 1930's). 20th Century Fox produced many of the critically acclaimed movies of the Golden Age, and Zanuck was directly responsible for all of these films getting made. He was also responsible for promoting the musical unit at FOX which produced the Alice Faye, Betty Grable and Carmen Miranda films. Most people do not realize that Betty Grable was the all-around top female box-office draw from 1942-1951. Her movies were so consistently, commercially successful that they enabled Zanuck to take financial risks on the "serious" dramas and "Oscar-contending" films. (Zanuck did not repay Grable very well in the end, but that's a matter for a different book) He was an astute businessman, and knew how to run a studio on par with the other Hollywood moguls. This book is not a biography of Darryl Zanuck and as such, we do not hear from the directors, actors, and writers who Zanuck was addressing in these memos. We can assume that many of these people did not always agree with Zanuck, and found him to be a meddler. The author has added commentary to elucidate the films Zanuck was writing about, or the people he was writing to, and to indicate what was the result of Zanuck's input. But be aware these memos represent the viewpoint of Zanuck, and the scope of the book does not include any first-hand rebuttals. I am giving this book five stars but with some qualifications: I feel that this book's appeal is mostly to film buffs or historians, or at least to those who already have some knowledge about Hollywood film-making during this period. If the reader has not seen most of the films that Zanuck is referring to in these memos, then these memos are not likely to be of much interest. But five-stars are warranted because I feel that the author has delivered exactly what he intended, and his commentary and editing have made the material coherent and compelling. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. An amazing work, perhaps the most insightful film book ever. By D. DeYoung. Mr. Rudy Behlmer is a genius. He is so adept at compiling memos with great insight into how movies were made in the Hollywood's Golden Age. Even if you have not seen any of the Twentieth Century Fox films discussed in the memos herein, you will be hooked, as I was. Through Mr. Behlmer's guidance, one can see how making movies was, and remains, a fascinating, multifaceted process. This is a truly remarkable feat of a book. Thank you so much for writing it, Mr. Behlmer! 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Like Father, like son---two Hollywood legends. By EPshots@yahoo.com. Love this concept--a compilation of film production memos from the desk of the great Darryl F Zanuck during his mighty reign at 20th Century-Fox, all READ by his son Richard--My only complaint is it doesn't go on longer! Amazing for a Fox studio aficionado like myself.

This volume provides an insider's view of Hollywood's most glamorous era and the elements of film production.

From Library Journal. On the surface, it would seem that a sampling of memos--even those issued by a famous name--would be slow going. Not a chance, where this volume is concerned! For those with even the slightest interest in cinema history and major Hollywood players, this is a treat. Zanuck's memos not only provide zestful details on sets, stars, and technical productions but also offer an eloquent insight into the man and his methods. Behlmer's annotations are informative but not obtrusive; he lets the original material speak for itself. A few more entries in the all-too-brief chronological addendum on Zanuck's life would have enhanced the overall impact of this excellent work. This well-organized and aptly illustrated collection will appeal to circulating libraries with cinema collections. - Carol J. Binkowski, Bloomfield, N.J. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From the Back Cover. One of Hollywood's towering figures for almost half a century, Darryl F. Zanuck presided over Twentieth Century-Fox during its most glorious era from 1935 to 1956. These were the golden days when stars like Marilyn Monroe, Henry Fonda, Betty Grable, Shirley Temple, Don Ameche, Gregory Peck, Tyrone Power, Carmen Miranda, and even Bette Davis roamed the lot; when such giants as John Ford, Joseph L. Mankiewicz, Elia Kazan, Nunnally Johnson, and Otto Preminger ruled the sets; and when such blockbusters as *The Grapes of Wrath*, *All About Eve*, *The King and I*, *Miracle on 34th Street*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *How Green Was My Valley*, *Laura*, *Twelve O'Clock High*, and *Viva Zapata!* filled the screen. Rudy Behlmer, whose now classic Memo from David O. Selznick was called "the most revealing, penetrating book on filmmaking I know" by director King Vidor, performs the same service for Zanuck in this first-

time-ever collection of his personal correspondence to the directors, writers, actors, technicians, and studio executives who made the period magical. Here is a from-the-top, at-the-moment, insider's look at the myriad elements that went into the production of a feature film during the colorful days of the old studio system, from the man who pulled it all together. And, like all important histories, Memo from Darryl F. Zanuck is equally revealing about the way things work today. A treasure trove of legend and lore, insights and nostalgia, Memo from Darryl F. Zanuck is as entertaining as it is informative, and full of secrets and surprises. Illustrated with photographs as intimate and candid as the correspondence itself, it offers a chronicle of Hollywood's most glamorous age and rich testimony to the taste, showmanship, and vision of its most resilient, efficient, and enduring producer.